



NEWS RELEASE

1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040
Voice (785) 271-2701, FAX (785) 271-2708, WEB www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 11, 2008
2701

Contact- Harold Alford (785) 271-

Community Facility And Storm Shelter Funding Available From USDA Rural Development

Community Facilities Program Funds Local Needs, Including Storm Sirens

Topeka, KS - Grant and loan funding continues to be available for essential rural Kansas community development programs and storm shelters through USDA Rural Development. The Agency's *Communities Facilities Program* is designed to assist in the development of essential community facilities, including storm sirens, for public use in rural areas, and the *Single Family Home Repair Grant & Loan Program* may assist in removing health and safety hazards for owner-occupied single family residences, such as storm shelters.

"The *Community Facilities Program* is a great tool to assist rural communities in developing new or enhancing existing facilities for public safety, public service and health care. The benefits of the program through grants and low-interest loans can significantly enhance the viability of critically needed community facility projects," commented State Director Banks.

Additionally, Banks said, "Severe weather can strike unexpectedly, often with serious personal consequences. As Kansans were again reminded last year, violent storms and the unfortunate loss of life underscores the need for improved home safety measures. The installation of an approved storm shelter offers important added safety and security when severe weather strikes. USDA can provide eligible homeowners an excellent opportunity to protect themselves and their families."

Through its *Community Facilities Programs*, the Department of Agriculture is striving to ensure that such facilities are readily available to all rural communities. Community Facilities Programs utilizes three flexible financial tools to achieve this goal: the Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program, the Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, and the Community Facilities Grant Program. Projects can include storm sirens, schools, libraries, courthouses, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue facilities and equipment, police and emergency vehicles and services, community centers, public buildings and transportation. A rural area, as it applies to the *Community Facilities Program*, is defined as any city, town or unincorporated area with a population of 20,000 or less, other than an urbanized area immediately adjacent to a city, town or unincorporated area with a population in excess of 20,000 residents. Public bodies, nonprofit corporations, and federally recognized Indian Tribes can be eligible applicants.

USDA Rural Development can also assist homeowners with other necessary improvements or repairs. In addition to helping finance residential storm shelters, funds have been provided for energy efficiency improvements such as installing insulation, replacing windows or new heating systems, along with roof repair or replacement, siding replacement, and providing sanitary water and waste disposal systems. Eligible program applicants must meet income guidelines for the county of residence, the home must be owned and occupied by the applicant, and the property must be located in a rural area or a community of less than 20,000 populations. Assistance is provided at a 1% fixed interest rate and/or by a grant. The maximum loan is \$20,000 with a repayment term not to exceed 20 years. Grants may be available for applicants 62 years of age or older who do not have repayment ability for a loan. Grants are sometimes combined with loans to increase the amount available for repairs.

Press Release**Page 2**

State Director Banks encourages Kansans interested in the Agency's programs to contact their local USDA Rural Development office, or they may call the state headquarters at 785-271-2720.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for rural Americans. USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. Since 2001, USDA Rural Development has delivered over \$1.2 billion for Kansas covering all Agency programs, supporting well over \$6 billion in future economic development for the Sunflower State.

For additional information regarding all USDA Rural Development programs, interested parties may call the Agency's state headquarters at 785-271-2700 or log onto the state's USDA Rural Development website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

USDA Rural Development – *Committed to the Future of Rural Communities.*

end –